

## Portion Sizes and School-Age Children

# Serving Sizes in the Classroom

### Background

- The Food Guide Pyramid was developed to help individuals make healthy food choices that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Different foods contain different nutrients and other healthful substances. No single food can give you all the nutrients you need. To get all the nutrients and other substances you need for health, build a healthy base by using the Food Guide Pyramid. The Food Guide Pyramid is applicable to all Americans over the age of 5 and is based on sound science. **It provides guidance on the number of servings and serving sizes you should eat from each food group.**

### What's in a Serving?

- Place a bowl and a box of cereal at the front of the classroom. Ask a student to come up and pour out the amount of cereal that he or she would eat for breakfast. Give them a measuring cup and help them measure the amount of cereal in the bowl. Point out that the serving of cereal from the Food Guide Pyramid is about 1 cup and that the "portion" in the bowl represents "x" number of servings. Point out that it is okay to eat more than one serving at a time, but they need to balance out the total number of servings they eat throughout the day. Use the **Food Guide Pyramid Serving Sizes** handout included with this kit.

### Measuring Stations

- Set up measuring stations that represent the five food groups. Have students practice measuring foods into paper plates, bowls and cups. Have them visualize the size of a serving. Some of the stations can provide examples of serving sizes for the students to view in addition to measure. Direct students to measure multiple portion sizes, for example, four servings of pasta. Be sure to have different measuring tools (i.e., liquid and dry measuring cups and measuring spoons). Ask students to think of common objects that are the same size as a serving of a particular serving of food. For example, a deck of cards is the same size as a serving of meat. Use the **What's in a Serving Size** and **Serving Sizes are in Your Hand** handouts included with this kit.

### Food Connection

- Make a smoothie with fresh fruit, ice and low-fat milk. Coordinate with your cafeteria manager for supplies and volunteers for assistance. Divide the class into groups. For each group, allow each child to take turns measuring an ingredient. After preparing the snack, enjoy! Point out that this is a healthy snack and identify the food groups and serving sizes from the Food Guide Pyramid that are represented.